

Letters to the Editor...

Cranberries et al.

August 17, 1960

Dear Sir:

I agree with the opinion expressed in a recent letter [Letters to Editor, *CALIFORNIA MEDICINE*, August, 1960, p. 108] that "The public who are exposed to medical propaganda, although they be adult, usually feel, and have a right to feel . . . about their nation's medical leaders [like a trusting child toward an omnipotent and omniscient parent]." But I think that we doctors have a right to help educate the public toward a more scientific viewpoint, instead of catering to their infantile desires and feelings. Our own scientific training and attitude helps us doctors to suspend judgment on the scary dilemmas presented to us by the atomic scientists. Let's try and bring "the public" up to our level, instead of treating them like dependent, unreasoning, easily frightened children.

S. H. SILVER, M.D.

Los Angeles

I too deplore the cranberry business and the chickens [Letters to the Editor, *CALIFORNIA MEDICINE*, August 1960, p. 108]. I think perhaps the medical profession has not been too courageous in these—has taken the so common attitude that "there might be something in it, so better not stick your neck out too far." You [Dr. Mark Lewis Gerstle, author of the letter] and I both know that neither aminotriazole nor diethylstilbestrol is carcinogenic in the usual sense of the word. We'd prescribe some milligrams of the former and 1/10 mg. of the latter for long term consumption with zero expectation of cancer. The tumors by the former were produced by the patient's pituitary secretion. The latter has a chemical formula that resembles that of some real carcinogens. But how get the sovereign people to work on their Congress to get a zero-tolerance law amended except by presenting them with the controversy? The unhappiness of having to make decisions when advisors disagree is the price that the sovereign has to pay for the right to run his own state.

I quite agree that the President needs more and better scientific consultants and wiser scientific advice. But the scientific advisor to the people is every scientist who will speak to them (if they'll listen). So the cure for the ill you write of is to have the scientists speak up. And the silver lining in the dark

cloud of conflicting opinions is that it inclines the people to listen.

The more security we Americans achieve, the more we value security. We're becoming valetudinarian!

Don't you know that the record of the rocks is clear—progress is made in times of stress.

I'll quote Herbert Hoover: "What do you want, comfort or accomplishment?"

San Francisco

R. R. NEWELL, M.D.

Dear Sir:

August 27, 1960

The August, 1960, issue of *CALIFORNIA MEDICINE* devoted to nuclear fallout brings up the question which should occur to all physicians who do obstetrics.

In an area such as the Los Angeles-Orange counties area, what would happen to those pregnant women who were at or near term, should the bomb hit this area? Hospital space would be taken up with the critically injured, and the uninjured would most probably be denied the use of hospital facilities.

The education of the public to use the physiologic squatting position for delivery would make such a situation much easier to bear for the women concerned.

A committee from the A.M.A. and the U. S. Public Health Service which included Dr. Paul Hodgkinson, obstetrician in chief of the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, has written a do-it-yourself pamphlet for such an emergency. This pamphlet is, I am told, available probably through the U. S. Public Health Service. It would seem that with an actual bombing, it would be a little late to attempt to distribute such a pamphlet. These pamphlets should be in the hands of women right along with the first packet of sample prenatal vitamins.

It is not very probable that women in general would use such information to deprive physicians in general of income. This is the only reason that I can think of which would be brought up opposing such distribution of this information. Giving the information now may make the plight of some women much more secure were the attack actually ever made.

Congratulations on the excellent articles on the nucleus of the atom, which could affect us all.

Yours truly,

FORREST H. HOWARD, M.D.

Garden Grove, California